

# *No. 21 – Kaweah River Basin Regional Water Management Plan*

## **Region Acceptance Process Summary**

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### **General Description of Region**

The Kaweah River Basin Integrated Regional Water Management Region (IRWM) is comprised of approximately 340,000 acres in the counties of Tulare and Kings. This Region is within the Tulare Lake Hydrologic Unit. This Region is defined primarily by hydrologic boundaries, except the southern boundary which is defined by the Tule River IRWM Region. Kaweah River Basin IRWM Region boundaries follow the watershed boundary formed by in-part by Cottonwood Creek to the north. However, this creates a small overlap with the Upper Kings Water Forum IRWM Region's southern boundary. Also, small islands of non-participation within the proposed Kaweah River Basin Region exist, such as the City of Exeter.

The Kaweah Delta Water Conservation District (KDWCD) has acted as the lead agency in the management of water resources available to the Kaweah River Basin, particularly as they have applied to groundwater resources and flood and stormwater control.

Several agencies have executed a Memorandum of Understanding and include KDWCD, Exeter Irrigation District, and the City of Lindsay. Several petitions also have been recently submitted to join in the MOU, including the City of Visalia, the County of Tulare, the Tulare Irrigation District, the City of Tulare, the Ivanhoe Irrigation District, and the St. Johns Water District. Principal water management activities undertaken by the cooperating agencies within the Kaweah River Basin have joined together with multiple agencies for management of pre-1914 water rights, groundwater management, and development of a formal IRWM Plan. The IRWM Region has a functionally equivalent plan. This IRWM Region has indicated that there is ongoing coordination and cooperation with neighboring IRWM Regions, in particular with the Tule River IRWM Region.

### **Interview Conclusions**

The IRWM region was granted conditional acceptance in the 2009 Region Acceptance Process. The IRWM region's RAP conditions were as follows: (1) to explore options on how best to structure the regional boundaries in this area; and (2) to consider for inclusion in the IRWM planning effort nearby "gap" areas, not covered by the Kern County, Poso Creek, Tule River, Kaweah River, or Southern Sierra IRWM Regions.

In 2013, Kaweah River Basin Regional Water Management Group (RWMG) provided evidence to the Department of Water Resources (DWR) that they have discussed with Deer Creek and Tule River Authority and considered DWR's recommendations and have determined that it is in the best interest of both regions to prepare two IRWM Plans specific to each river basin. The two regions will also be extending their coordinated efforts by merging the Advisory Committees of the two IRWMs, combine project development and evaluation, develop a process to delineate the needs and capabilities of entities within the combined subbasins, and conduct a review of this structure in five years to assess its success.

### **Conclusions - Accepted**

The RWMG has addressed the conditions included in the 2009 RAP decision. The RWMG is encouraged to continue to cooperate and coordinate with neighboring IRWM regions to ensure that IRWM planning and implementations efforts progress in a complementary and coordinated manner.